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New Capacity Building Initiative Aims to Deepen Family Engagement

Minneapolis, Minn., June 1, 2020 – A new initiative between Propel Nonprofits, the McKnight Foundation, and The Minneapolis Foundation is launching to develop the capacity of community-based organizations that have experience with family engagement and are led by and serve Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. The initiative seeks to support the voice of local families in education systems change by strengthening the organizations that connect families and the K-12 education system. The Capacity Building Initiative for Family Engagement will be administered by Propel Nonprofits and is an outgrowth of partner input and research.

Both McKnight and The Minneapolis Foundation have supported organizations that implement family engagement programming in the K-12 educational system with a shared belief that families are the most credible stakeholders in education systems change. “This launch of this initiative reflects substantive input from stakeholders in McKnight’s former Education program. They encouraged us to support groups that recognize and amplify families’ power to advocate for systems change at the school, district and state level,” said Erin Imon Gavin, Director of Program Integration and Program Officer at the McKnight Foundation.

The Capacity Building Initiative for Family Engagement will work with 12 BIPOC-led and serving nonprofits or fiscally sponsored organizations in the 7-county Twin Cities metro area with a track record of family engagement programming to strengthen their internal infrastructure for more effective outcomes in their work. “BIPOC-led and serving organizations have deep expertise but have not historically been supported in ways that provide flexibility and equip their organizations to be effective,” said Patrice Relerford, Director of Impact Strategy for Education at The Minneapolis Foundation. “Our foundations are supporting the Capacity Building Initiative as part of our commitment to equity and in recognition that education systems change is multi-layered.”

Propel Nonprofits, an Upper Midwest nonprofit capacity building organization based in Minneapolis, was selected to administer this program given its long history of working with mission-driven organizations to develop operational infrastructure. Specifically, Propel Nonprofits leads several cohorts for nonprofit leaders annually to focus on topics including strategic and financial alignment and management, leadership development, and peer learning. Propel is partnering with a community advisory committee to provide input and strategic advice on the design and implementation of the initiative.

“The goal of this initiative is to strengthen the capacity of these organizations and their leaders,” said Naima Farah, Program Manager at Propel Nonprofits for the Capacity
Building Initiative. “Our cohort learning model paired with essential operating funding will deepen their work to make our K-12 education system more welcoming and responsive to BIPOC families.”

Applications for the Capacity Building Initiative for Family Engagement will open on June 8, 2020, and be available on Propel Nonprofits’ website. For more information on this new initiative, visit: https://www.propelnonprofits.org/capacity-building-initiative-family-engagement/.

ABOUT THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION: The McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based family foundation, advances a more just, creative, and abundant future where people and planet thrive. Established in 1953, the McKnight Foundation is deeply committed to advancing climate solutions in the Midwest; building an equitable and inclusive Minnesota; and supporting the arts in Minnesota, neuroscience and international crop research. The Foundation has approximately $2.3 billion in assets and grants about $90 million a year. www.mcknight.org

ABOUT THE MINNEAPOLIS FOUNDATION: For more than 100 years, The Minneapolis Foundation has connected people, resources and ideas to improve lives in Minnesota and beyond. The Foundation manages $900 million in assets, providing customized and tax-smart giving solutions that result in the average annual distribution of more than $70 million in grants. The Foundation brings people together to unite behind common goals and spark positive change in our community. www.minneapolisfoundation.org.

ABOUT PROPEL NONPROFITS: Propel Nonprofits fuels the impact and effectiveness of nonprofits with guidance, expertise, and capital. Its services include accounting and finance, board governance, fiscal sponsorship, lending, skills and knowledge sharing, strategic consulting, and training. Propel Nonprofits serves nonprofit organizations in Minnesota and the adjacent states of Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Learn more at propelnonprofits.org.